# The Black Cat

JANUARY 1905

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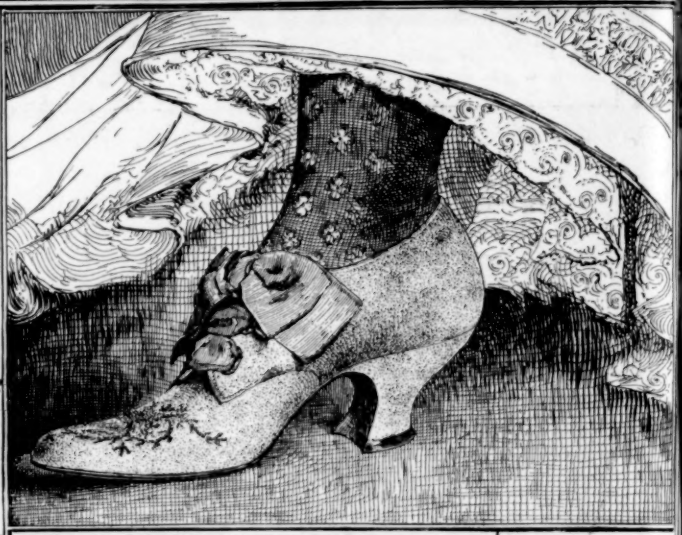

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# The Black Cat

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## The Eleventh Goose.*

BY CLIFFORD HOWARD.

"SAY, Jenkins, tell me what you think of that," and Thompson waved his cigar in the direction of a painting that hung near the piano.

Jenkins had come in a moment or two before and was preparing to settle himself for a smoke.

"You mean this bit of landscape?" he answered, walking over to the wall and striking a match on his heel. "I never was much of a judge of this sort of thing, but I guess it's all right. It looks natural enough — trees and mountains and a sunset on the water; but all sort of commonplace, seems to me."

Thompson swung back on the sofa and hugged his knee. "I'm sorry for you, Jenkins," he said, quietly. "Life must be a dreary sort of waste to fellows like you who can't discriminate between a chromo and a work of real art. Why, man, that's a genuine Corot."

"A what?"

"A Corot — done by Corot, the famous French artist. You don't mean, Jenkins, you've never heard of Corot?"

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* The writer of this story received a cash prize of $150 in THE BLACK CAT story contest ending October 12, 1904.

"How do you spell him?"

"C–o–r–o–t, of course."

"Oh, that's the chap, is it? Trouble is, these Frenchmen sound different than they look. If you don't pronounce the 't,' what's the earthly good of tagging it on to the name? And I suppose, because this is a 'genuine Corot,' you paid a pretty penny for it, eh?"

"Yes — and no. It was a big price for me to pay, but it was dirt cheap considering the value of the canvas. It was one of the Vandegraft collection — sold at auction last week — and I got it knocked down to me at a ridiculously low figure. I don't see what the other buyers could have been thinking about."

"A bargain-sale picture? And yet I must say, Thompson, it's got some good points about it, especially this flock of wild geese here. They are quite effective, 'pon my word, silhouetted against this red sky. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. Just ten of 'em. Wonder your old friend didn't make a round dozen of 'em while he was about it."

Thompson flecked the ashes from his cigar. "Count them again," he said. "You missed one."

"Is that so? I must be getting near-sighted," and Jenkins, with the aid of his finger, carefully counted them over. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, — and that's all, so far as I can see."

"Then you can't see straight," commented Thompson. "I counted them only a few days ago as a matter of curiosity, and they footed up eleven."

"Well, that may be; but there are only ten now. One of them must have flown away, I guess. That's one of the disadvantages of such fine paintings — they're too natural." Jenkins struck another match and proceeded to light his pipe. "Mebbe your missing goose has got into the woods at the other end of the landscape," he continued, between puffs. "Perhaps you can shoo him out; I'd like to see him."

Thompson smiled good-humoredly.

"Why, certainly," he answered, "I'll get him out for you, with pleasure," and picking up a pencil from his desk he walked over to the picture. "Perhaps you're not accustomed to counting French geese."

"Perhaps," assented Jenkins.

"Well, there's *one*," pursued Thompson, placing the rubber end of the pencil on the leader of the flock; "and there's two, and three; four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten; — ten — "

"Well?" inquired Jenkins, taking a pull at his pipe.

"I must have missed one," explained Thompson, and forthwith he repeated the count. The result was the same — ten.

Jenkins smiled. Thompson scowled and puffed smoke for a moment or two, without audible comment, as he gazed at the picture. "It beats me," he declared at length. "When I counted those geese last Saturday there were eleven of them, as sure as I am standing here this minute."

Jenkins dropped lazily into a Morris chair and stretched his legs. "I tell you what it is, old man," he said; "you'll have to get a wire netting and fence those birds in."

His host was counting — "seven, eight, nine — *ten!* Well, if that doesn't beat the Dutch!"

"And the Devil," added Jenkins. "It's just as I tell you, Thompson; if you want to squander your money on these realistic masterpieces you've got to take the consequences. Now, first thing you know, it'll begin to rain and that lake will spill out on your carpet."

Thompson tossed his pencil on to the table and resumed his seat. "That's all very funny," — he replied, soberly, — "all very funny, but, seriously now, Jenkins, I tell you there were eleven geese in that flock when I counted them before."

"That's all right, old man — I'm not doubting your word. They're your geese and you ought to know how many there are. Perhaps number eleven'll come back some day — you can't tell. But all jokes aside, Thompson, I like that picture — I really do. I was a bit too close to it before. It shows up fine from here. Yes, sir, that's all right — that's a great piece of work — it grows on you."

Jenkins struck a match on the sole of his left shoe and proceeded to re-light his pipe. "Good-tasting tobacco," he remarked, as he shook out the match flame, "but the infernalest stuff for going out." He twirled the match into the fireplace and settled back comfortably. "By the way, Thompson, have you met Miss Beveridge?"

"Beveridge?" queried Thompson, — "Beveridge? Never heard of her. Who is she?"

"Neighbor of yours upstairs — has the flat right over this. And so you haven't met her yet?"

"No, I have not had the pleasure. I don't know that I've ever seen her, unless she is the young woman I've passed in the hall once or twice — tall and willowy, light hair, large brown eyes, and one of these soft, velvety, peach-like complexions?"

"Perfect, Monsieur Bertillon — perfect! Upon my word, old fellow, she must have made an impression!"

"Pshaw! that doesn't follow," evaded Thompson. "She's a girl of striking appearance, and I just happened to get a good look at her — that's all. At the same time, though, I wouldn't mind meeting her."

"And I have an impression," supplemented Jenkins, "that she would like to know you a little better."

"Know me a little better? Well, that's a compliment, certainly. I would not have flattered myself that she knew me at all."

"You can't always tell about such things," and Jenkins ignited a match noisily along the lower edge of his chair, preparatory to another lighting of his pipe.

"No, I suppose not," admitted Thompson, with conscious indifference. "At all events, Jenkins, it shall be your happy lot to bring about this mutually desired acquaintanceship."

"Sorry I can't oblige you, old man — but the truth is, I'm not in a position to do it."

"Why not? What's the trouble?"

"No trouble; only we don't happen to be acquainted."

Thompson tilted his head against the wall and slowly exhaled a mouthful of smoke toward the ceiling.

"What's the joke?" he asked, drily.

"No joke, old man. Some day, though, perhaps I'll tell you something — unless you should meet *her* in the meantime."

Thompson silently declined to betray his curiosity.

"But, that's neither here nor there," concluded Jenkins; "so let's have some music. How's that new piece of Strauss' you were talking to me about the other day? Is it any good?" and with this digression Miss Beveridge passed out of the conversation.

Had Thompson been less consciously interested in the subject, he would not have submitted thus readily to her dismissal; but, being a bachelor and scenting love for the first time, he fought shy of Jenkins' raillery and sought to disarm suspicion by a show of indifference. He felt bashfully annoyed at himself for the pertinacity with which his thoughts reverted to this young woman, whom he had noticed for the first time scarcely two weeks before. He had probably seen her but three or four times in all. On each occasion it was no more than a passing glance, but each time he had caught, in her face or in her figure, some added charm — some further realization of his bachelorhood ideal of feminine perfection. It was with a feeling akin to resentment that he learned her name through his friend Jenkins. In a vague sort of way he had expected to discover it himself.

As a matter of fact, Jenkins had a way of making him feel uncomfortable. There was a flippancy about Jenkins — a certain sense of irresponsibility — that often went against the grain of the more serious-minded Thompson. On this particular evening he was especially annoyed at the bantering way in which Jenkins accepted his statement regarding the number of geese in the picture. To a man with Thompson's reverent regard for a work of art, such jocular comments as those indulged in by Jenkins fell far short of being appreciated.

But, aside from this, Thompson was both vexed and puzzled. It vexed him to think that he, a reputed art connoisseur, should stand convicted of having indulged in the childish curiosity of counting the number of geese in the painting. But, having done so and having convinced himself that there were eleven of them, he could not be otherwise than puzzled to discover that one of the birds was missing. Had he not fixed the number eleven so firmly in his mind as the result of his first numeration, he would at once have ascribed the discrepancy to a miscount in the first place, and dismissed the matter from further consideration. But this, under the circumstances, he found impossible. He was as sure that there were eleven when he counted them the week before as he was that there were ten when he counted them this evening.

Scarcely had the door closed after Jenkins when Thompson again examined the picture. Three times he counted the geese,

— carefully, slowly, anxiously, — and each time the result was — ten. There was no possibility of further doubt, — there were ten geese in the flock and ten only.

To spare himself the unpleasant conviction that he was a lunatic, Thompson reluctantly conceded that he must have made a mistake the week before.

But this concession to his sanity in no wise relieved his mind of its perplexity, and during the ensuing week he had geese on the brain to the exclusion of all else save Miss Beveridge. Once he met her at the front door of the apartment house and hailed with secret delight the opportunity it gave him to stand aside and raise his hat to her as she passed in. This little act of courtesy she had acknowledged with a bow and a scarcely audible "Thank you," but her eyes had met his frankly and smilingly. Then, a day or two later, he discovered her going up the stairs ahead of him. He had determined when he next encountered her to make himself acquainted, under the pretext of expressing a hope that his piano did not annoy her, though, as a matter of fact, he seldom played on it. Unfortunately, however, his plan was frustrated by a rude boy, who came bounding down the stairs and bumped into him so unmercifully hard that there was nothing to do but relieve his injured feelings by collaring the lad and shaking him well and plentifully, to the accompaniment of some straightforward advice on stairway etiquette.

It was only his diverting thoughts of Miss Beveridge, with her glorious eyes and the inflaming atmosphere of her personality, that saved him from growing silly over the matter of his missing goose. And even with this restraint upon his naturally morbid propensities, his mind persisted in referring to the subject, and every little while he was startled to find himself mechanically counting the flock of geese, that remained forever in a state of quiescent flight across a sunset sky. Each time the flock consisted of ten, and each time he was candid enough to admit that he was himself a goose. This was the only explanation he had to offer for his conduct, for when a man, born with a moody and romantic disposition, becomes the victim of a crotchety obsession, he is not to be judged by the every-day standards of common sense.

Dating from the night of Jenkins' last visit, the painting became invested with an unholy fascination for him. It bothered and worried him. He sometimes regretted that he had ever purchased it, and more than once the suggestion of selling it flashed across his unwilling mind. He found it next to impossible to longer enjoy its beauties as a landscape picture. Whenever he looked at it, his gaze was irresistibly centered on the flock of geese. All else was subordinated to this one feature. What had been designed as a mere detail became now the focal object of the painting. He blamed Jenkins for it. That was some comfort. It was just like Jenkins, who knew infinitely more about gunning than he did about art, to emphasize the geese out of all proportion to their surroundings. If the question of the number had not arisen, this bit of stupidity on the part of Jenkins would never have affected him; but now, alas, he saw only geese in the picture, every line and every shade of each individual bird having become indelibly impressed on his brain. And, worst of all, there remained the haunting sense of certainty that one of the flock was missing.

It is a question, therefore, whether Thompson was really very much surprised when the eleventh goose made its reappearance. Naturally, it startled him somewhat, for he had no rational expectation that such a thing would happen, but in a certain sense he accepted it as something that was due him, whatever might be the mystery surrounding its consummation. At all events, the miracle occurred.

He was lounging in his Morris chair, consuming an after-dinner cigar, when his glance rested upon the tantalizing Corot. Whether his sight had grown uncertain, whether it was his imagination, or whether there really was a difference, he was on the instant unready to decide. Whatever it was, he was conscious that in some indefinite particular the picture did not look the same.

With straining eyes he approached the painting and counted hastily with his finger: "one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten — eleven."

He repeated the count — repeated it three times. The eleventh goose had returned.

With his thumbs in his trousers pockets and his cigar tucked

in a corner of his mouth, Thompson paced meditatively back and forth across the room. At the end of five minutes he stopped and again faced the picture. He had made no mistake — eleven geese were flying across the sunset sky.

Thompson pitched his cigar into the fireplace and stepping over to the telephone on his desk, rang up central with impatient emphasis.

"Let me have Main two sixty-two," he ordered. "Hello, is this Mr. Jenkins' residence? Tell him, please, that Mr. Thompson wishes to speak to him. Hello, is that you, Jenkins? Can you stop around and see me this evening? What? I want to show you something — want to speak to you about something. How's that? No, it's about that Corot of mine. When you were here last week you remember you counted ten geese in the flock? You're absolutely sure there were ten, are you? And you remember at the time I told you I had counted eleven a few days before? Well, come around this evening and count them again. Yes, there are eleven; but I'm not asking you to take my word for it; come count them yourself. What's that? Oh, quit your nonsense; I'm serious about this. If you've got any rational explanation to offer, let's have it. What! Miss Beveridge! Why, what in thunder has she got to do with this? No, I haven't met her yet. Well, supposing she is? Oh, that's all right enough, but what in the name of common sense are you driving at, anyway? Oh, you will, will you? I don't half believe it; but come around anyhow. About half past eight? All right. By-by."

As he hung up the receiver, his door bell announced a caller.

"My laundry," he thought, feeling for his change.

As he opened the door the rose-shaded light of the room illumined in soft relief the form and face of a young woman. The expectation of encountering a frowzy lad with a laundry bundle did not at once permit Thompson's faculties to adjust themselves to the actual situation, and it was not until the lapse of an appreciable second that he realized he was standing face to face with Miss Beveridge.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," she faltered, lowering her eyes before Thompson's bald attitude of surprise — "I — I would like to speak a word with Mr. Thompson."

"At your service," responded Thompson, nervously. "Won't — won't you walk in?" and with a bow and a little wave of the hand he stepped aside.

"No, thank you," she declined quickly. "If he will kindly come to the door — I shall detain him but a moment."

"Why, yes, certainly — I beg your pardon," returned Thompson, flustered and bewildered. "Why, certainly. You are Miss Beveridge, I believe?"

"Yes; and I would like to speak to Mr. Thompson, please."

"Oh, — why, — pardon me — I am Mr. Thompson."

"You!" Miss Beveridge drew back with a start. "I mean Mr. Thompson — Mr. Charles Thompson — the gentleman who has this apartment," she hastened to explain.

"Well, that's me," pursued Thompson, thrown off his grammatical guard by the perplexity of the conversation. "I am Mr. Charles Thompson, and this is my apartment."

Miss Beveridge stared blankly into Thompson's bewildered face. "I must have made a mistake — there is some misunderstanding," she apologized uneasily, the deep flush of her cheeks emphasizing her embarrassment. "I'm looking for the Mr. Thompson" she went on hastily, "who owns a landscape by Corot."

"With a flock of wild geese in it?" inquired Thompson.

"Yes — that's the picture."

"Well — why, pardon me, Miss Beveridge," he floundered, "but that's my picture; I own that picture. See, there it is," and, flinging open the door, he pointed to it on the opposite wall.

It was the evidence Miss Beveridge had called for.

"I don't understand it at all," she declared in a tone of hopeless confusion, as her glance rested on the painting. "That surely is the picture and this is the same room; but you are not the same man."

"Not the same man?" echoed Thompson, groping for a mental foothold. "I don't think I quite understand."

"Oh, I am quite sure you are not the same man," she insisted. "The gentleman I saw here before was quite unlike you in every way."

"You saw him here? — in this room?"

"Yes."

"And he told you his name was Thompson?"

"Yes; — well, no, — that is, he didn't say so in so many words. When he loaned me the picture, I asked him to whom I was indebted for his kindness, and he — "

"When he loaned you the picture?" broke in Thompson, explosively.

"Why, yes! You surely don't mean you know nothing about it?" and Miss Beveridge caught her breath as with sudden alarm.

"Really, Miss Beveridge," he responded, bluntly; "I don't know what you are talking about — I really do not. Won't you please explain what all this means? And don't let me keep you standing; pray be seated, if only for a moment."

"I hardly know how to explain — how to apologize," she answered, entering the room and seating herself uneasily on the edge of the nearest chair. "I am so confused and bewildered, and mortified; I don't know what you must think of me; I have made a dreadful mistake in some way."

"I'm sure it can't be anything so very dreadful," he reassured her, as he seated himself sidewise of the piano stool and threw his arm carelessly over the back. "You say that some one calling himself Mr. Thompson loaned you my picture?"

"Yes. I got on to this floor by mistake one day, about two weeks ago. Your door happened to be open as I was passing and I caught sight of this Corot hanging here. I was so surprised to see it again I stood stock still and simply stared at it."

"To see it *again*?" repeated Thompson, curiously.

"Yes. You know, of course, it was in the Vandegraft art gallery for a number of years. It is one of my favorites, and old Mrs. Vandegraft used to let me come there and copy it."

"Then you are an artist?" he digressed.

"I am not sure," she answered, modestly. "I only copy the works of others."

"To do that well is an art in itself," he assured her.

She acknowledged the implied compliment with a smile, and went on: "I was at work on a copy of this Corot when the collection was sold. It was a great disappointment to me, because I wanted to finish it from the original. I had a copy of it in my studio that I had made about a month before for a lady in Phila-

delphia, and of course I could have finished the second copy from that, and that is what I should have been obliged to do if I had not happened to see the original hanging in your room, and if the owner of it — at least the one I supposed to be the owner of it — had not happened to come in just at that moment. It was one of those impulsive things I do sometimes and regret afterwards, but, without stopping to think, I had the audacity to introduce myself to him and ask him if he would loan me the picture for a few days until I could finish the copy. He seemed to be perfectly willing on condition that I would replace it for the time being with my finished copy."

"Was he a short man, with a light mustache and rather curly hair?" asked Thompson.

"Yes; and I think he wore glasses."

"I thought so."

"Then you know who it was?"

"Oh, yes, very well. His name is Jenkins."

"And had he any right to do what he did?"

"None in the world."

"Why, how perfectly outrageous!"

"Yes, perhaps so; but all depends upon the point of view. Jenkins probably thinks it is all a very good joke, and dreadfully funny. For my part, I don't feel I ought to blame him for loaning you my picture, for he did only what I would have been most happy to do; and besides that, had it not been for his joke I should not have had the pleasure of meeting you this evening."

The roses in Miss Beveridge's cheeks deepened for a moment as she answered: "It is extremely good of you, Mr. Thompson, to take it all so good-naturedly and so graciously; and I scarcely know what to say to you — how to express my thanks and apologies." She rose and extended her hand. "At all events, I hope you will let me feel that I am forgiven — that you bear me no ill will — by some time returning this 'visit' of mine. I shall be very glad indeed to show you my studio."

"And I know I shall find it most interesting," he responded, shaking her hand and bowing gallantly. "It is a privilege of which I shall be delighted to avail myself at the first opportunity. Oh, by the way," he added abruptly, as she was about to pass out,

"you have not yet told 'Mr. Thompson' what it was you wanted to see him about."

"Why, how perfectly ridiculous," she laughed — to come on a special mission and forget all about it! It was simply to tell 'Mr. Thompson' that I had the janitor bring his picture back this afternoon, and to again express my obligations and sincere thanks for his kindness."

Thompson turned about and faced the picture. "And so it was your copy that was hanging there during the past week?" he said reflectively; "and I never knew it."

"I am afraid the compliment is not deserved," she confessed. "It is probably only because the two pictures happened to be framed alike that you did not notice the substitution. If you had examined my copy I am sure you would have discovered at least one glaring dissimilarity. Why, I was perfectly horrified when I compared it with my new copy this afternoon to discover for the first time that I had failed to complete the flock of geese."

"You don't tell me!" remarked Thompson.

"I can't understand how I ever allowed such a mistake to occur. I had only ten birds in the flock and there ought to be eleven."

"Is that so? And are you sure, Miss Beveridge, you did not have eleven at first? I have a friend who says he knows of a case where a bird was painted so realistically it flew away," and Thompson smiled sweetly as Miss Beveridge took her departure amid blushes and a laughing response.

# When White Turned Black.*

BY FRANK A. HAYS.

EVER since a small boy, I have been a great admirer of a railroad locomotive. Well I remember such engines as the "Reindeer," "Antelope," and "Sampson." I can yet see these names, in raised brass letters, beneath the cab windows. It used to be a matter of curiosity to know just how fast the two former could run, and how many cars the latter could pull. Ofttimes, since those days, I have spent my spare moments, when about railway stations, in watching the different makes and models of locomotives as they moved to and fro, like things animate, or stood, deep-breathing giants of iron and steel, subservient to the hand of man.

A short time ago, while waiting for a train in Pittsburg, I noticed a new and unusually large passenger engine standing on a siding, and I wandered over to it. It proved to be one of Baldwin's latest machines — a "ten-wheeler, compound cylinder" engine. I walked from one side to the other and scrutinized every part, from the electric head-light to the vestibule attachment at the rear of the tank. I was just turning to leave, to look at another, when the engineer pleasantly said:

"Better come up in the cab and see how nice it is."

Being only too glad of an opportunity, I lost no time in climbing up and inspecting the nerve-centre of the eighty-ton monster. Many times I had been in engine cabs, but in this one I noticed something I never had seen in any other.

It was a small, oblong box or case fastened on top of the steam-gauge. It was made of bevel-plate glass, with gold mountings. In the box, standing on end, was a single, snow-white feather, three inches long by three-quarters of an inch wide.

Turning to the engineer and pointing to the glass case, I said:

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"That's rather an unusual, yet a very pretty ornament."

"Yes," he said, "not only all that, but very much more. Its significance is far greater and more important."

Looking at his watch, he continued:

"I have just twenty-three minutes before time to hook on to the East-bound 'New York and Philadelphia Limited,' and if you'll share my seat here with me, I'll tell you why that white feather is there."

Being interested, I sat down by him, and said:

"I am ready to listen."

"Well," he said, "it was while I was running the 525 that what I'll tell you happened. My, but 525 is an engine for you! She 's as swift as the wind, and as easy to handle as a toy. How I did dislike to have her taken away from me! But she was transferred to the Western Division, as the grades there are lighter, and this engine was built heavier, for mountain climbing. Old 525 will bring in the 'Limited' from the West, and when she pulls in get close and look at her, for it will add interest to my story. But I must hurry.

"East of here, about ninety miles, is our longest tunnel, No. 4, and one-quarter of a mile from the east end of the tunnel is a small river, over which is a bridge of two spans. This bridge has always been considered dangerous, owing to the fact that the river is very swift and rises very suddenly, on account of rains and snows in the mountains.

"About two years ago a young woman was killed just as we ran out of the east end of tunnel No. 4. She was hit by the 525 at the dead hour of midnight. When we picked her up we discovered that she was attired in pure white — her night clothes. We afterward heard that she was a somnambulist, and that she had wandered from her home, only a few yards distant, and was certainly crossing the track in her sleep.

"On my first run East, after the death of the girl, all went right, yet I could not keep from thinking of what had happened the last time I had made the trip. It had made a strong impression on my mind, and I was just a little bit nervous as we entered No. 4. As we neared the east end my heart beat louder and faster.

"'What *was* that?' I asked myself, as I saw, or imagined I saw, for just one second, something snow-white flash ahead of my engine. By the time I had pushed in the throttle and reached for the air-lever it had disappeared.

"'Was I dreaming?' No, not that; for engineers don't dream in their cabs. 'Was I becoming superstitious or nervous?' I concluded to let it go as imagination.

"On my return trip I thought of what had occurred, and it was constantly on my mind. We struck tunnel No. 4, and, though it was daylight, I was on the alert, but nothing appeared.

"Next trip East I entered No. 4 with more anxiety than I ever had, for previous to that time I had expected nothing, but now it was: 'Will I see it, or will I not see it?'

"'Ah!' I push on the throttle, for again a momentary flash of white; but, as before, it vanishes at the exit of the tunnel.

"'Be what it may,' I thought, 'it gets out of our way; so next time I'll let her go.'

"The next half-dozen trips the same thing appeared. I was not superstitious, and I became more and more determined to learn what it was. As I would near the exit, I would shade my eyes and strain my vision, that I might make out what it was; but at the end of a week it was more of a mystery than it was the first night.

"One night, as 'leaving time' drew near, Mr. Barnes, our Superintendent of Motive Power, climbed up into the cab and said:

"'Henry, I believe I'll ride over, as far as Altoona, with you to-night.'

"'All right, glad to have you.'

"And I was, for, besides being a good fellow, Barnes had a pair of keen eyes, and I wanted to ascertain if some one else would see as I had seen.

"As we approached No. 4 I said to Barnes — so he would be sure to be looking ahead at the right time —

"'Bet you the cigars I can guess closer to the time it takes to run through!'

"'Can't do it. I say four minutes. What's yours?'

"'Three and a half.'

"'All right,' said Barnes. 'Here we are,' pulling out his watch.

"We entered the tunnel; we neared the point for the mysterious 'flash signals'; we reached it, when —

"'*Look!*' cried Barnes, as the white streak flashed ahead of us.

"'Say, Henry, what in the devil was *that?*'

"'Looked like a newspaper wafted ahead of us,' I said.

"'Yes,' replied Barnes, 'but papers don't fly ahead of a train — they follow.'

"'Well,' I answered, 'you figure it out by the time we reach Altoona, and then tell me.'

"So it was not imagination on my part, for some other eyes saw it. Barnes knew nothing about what I had seen, and I hoped he would have a solution by the time we reached Altoona, but as I stopped in the station, he said:

"'Blamed if that thing, or it, we saw in No. 4 hasn't kept me guessing ever since.'

"'Well, what is it?' I asked.

"'Give it up. More than that, it startled me so, I lost cigars, for I forgot to catch the time.'

"Night after night, as I neared the end of the tunnel, I would see the same thing. It would appear before me like a flash and flit along ahead, for an instant, and then as suddenly disappear. It was very strange, to say the least, and while I became more or less accustomed to it, yet I was always on the lookout for it as it seemed to have a fascination, or an influence, about it. I had spoken of it to no one, not even to my fireman, but I concluded to say something to him, so I asked:

"'John, have you ever seen anything unusual, as we go East, in No. 4?'

"'Yes,' he replied, 'I confess I have seen, or imagined I have seen, that figure in white that we struck.'

"There was little consolation, or explanation, in that for me, so I dropped the subject. I said no more to any one, but during the next month I did a lot of thinking, for not a single trip did we go East, but what this 'figure in white' would glide out of No. 4 ahead of us. When about home I would spend the most of my time in thinking of some solution. So absorbed did I become that my wife noticed it and said:

"'Henry, are you sick, or in trouble?'

"'Why, Mary, neither, I assure you; but I have been studying on a problem I wish to solve.'

"I wouldn't tell my wife what the 'problem' was, for, woman-like, she would have been uneasy all the time, and would have thought that I would sure be killed on each trip. Nor I wouldn't ask any of the other engineers if they had seen anything unusual, for fear they would accuse me of losing my nerve, but I did again ask John if he had been seeing the 'figure in white.'

"'Yes,' he said, 'I've seen her every night we've gone East, since the night we killed her.'

"'Since we *killed* her,' I thought.

"Next day at home I was thinking of what poor consolation my fireman's last remark afforded me, when my wife noticed my silence and called me down with:

"'Henry, it seems you have a very difficult problem to solve.'

"'Pshaw, Mary, I've given that up long ago. I am now worried because I hear that my 525 is to be transferred to the Western Division. I am sure that's enough to make me melancholy, for I have been with her longer than I have been with you.'

"That very night out I had the pleasure of sitting behind the first electric head-light ever placed on one of our engines. My fireman and I were very proud of it, and were anxious to see how it would work. After we had made sixty miles and noted how much stronger the light was, and how much plainer and farther we could see by this light than by the old lamp, I said:

"'John, to-night we can get a better view of what flags us in No. 4.'

"Looking at me intently for a moment, he replied:

"'I hope to Heaven we will, for I have lost more than a month's sleep thinking about it. Besides that, I strain my eyes, every time we go through, till I have a headache.'

"The night was dark, and as we climbed up in the mountains evidence of heavy rains was apparent, and a mist hung over everything. All went well till we were signalled down to a dead stop, and lost thirty minutes, while a landslide was removed from the track.

"Fifty miles an hour was our regular schedule and anything

"'All right,' said Barnes. 'Here we are,' pulling out his watch.

"We entered the tunnel; we neared the point for the mysterious 'flash signals'; we reached it, when —

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"Fifty miles an hour was our regular schedule and anything

that had heretofore got out of our way would not have as much time to-night for, in making up lost time, I was pushing the 525 at seventy miles when she stuck her nose into No. 4.

"'Now for our "figure in white"!

"'Will she get out of our way — get in the clear?'

"As we dashed through every nerve was at its highest tension, my eyes were riveted along the beam of electric light.

"We neared the exit!

"We reached it!

"I looked over at John, as much as to ask:

"'What has become of the "figure in white"?'

"When in answer to my mental question he jumped from his seat — clutched my arm and shouted:

"'For God's sake — Stop!

"'Yonder she stands in the bridge, but now — now she's in *black*.'

"Looking ahead I saw what made my heart leap, for, sure enough, there stood a quivering, black object in the centre of the bridge, only one-quarter of a mile away. Quick as thought I knocked the throttle in, turned on air and reversed her — coming to a stop less than two hundred yards from the bridge. By this time our conductor, lantern in hand, was out by the side of the train and I called for him to come forward, and showed him what had caused me to stop.

"'What's that crazy woman doing out there to-night? Do you suppose there's anything wrong with the bridge? Let's go ahead and see.'

"'Come on, John, and go with us.'

"On the way I had all kinds of thoughts. The past and the present were enough to make a fellow think.

"As we neared the river we could hear it roaring, when John, who was ahead, suddenly stopped with the startling information:

"'The bridge is *gone*.'

"Sure enough it was, but not so with the black, quivering signal. It still stood there, a silent and ominous warning — stood there above the roaring water with no more support than the air itself.

"So we left it.

"As we walked back to the train we all tried to explain who, what, or which it was, but evidently to no one's satisfaction. Several times we stopped and looked back to see if it had gone. Each time we saw the same black, quivering spectre — the spectre, or whatever it was — that had saved all our lives.

"As we neared the engine we saw a white object lying on the pilot. John rushed forward, picked it up, and held it out at arm's length:

"A snow-white pigeon!

"Naturally, I glanced upward, and as I did so my eyes fell upon an object sticking on the very centre of the glass of the head-light.

"'John,' I said, 'climb up there and see what that is.'

"He hurriedly did so and holding it up said:

"'It's a white feather out of that white pigeon we've struck and killed.'

"'Put that feather *back* there,' excitedly called the conductor.

"Sticking it back on the glass, which was wet from heavy mist, John said:

"'There you are: what about it?'

"'Look toward the bridge,' from the conductor.

"There stood the warning figure in black.

"'Now take the feather away.'

"It was removed.

"'Now look toward the bridge.'

"The figure in black had *disappeared.*

"For months we had frightened that white pigeon from her roosting place in the tunnel. She had flown out ahead of us till struck, and killed, by our electric head-light when one white feather cast a black shadow — *when white turned black.*"

# Stairescape.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.

BY actual count it was the fifth time in an hour that he had answered the door-bell that morning, and when he opened the door he found, as usual, a peddler standing on the porch. The fellow had a small bucket of onions and a basket of string-beans in his hands.

"String-a-beans, lady? Onions? string-a-beans?"

With a swift dive Jones grabbed the peddler by the ear and thrust his face before a large sign above the door-bell, which read:

NO PEDDLERS OR AGENTS

"Do you see that?" demanded the irate Jones.

"Let a–go my ear!" cried the peddler, who was a little, wizen-faced Italian.

"Read it!" commanded the man whose house wasn't his castle.

The Italian stared at the sign, gave his ear a tug, and exclaimed, "Sac-ra-ment-o!"

"You lie!" thundered Jones. "That sign reads, 'No Peddlers or Agents'."

"I no can read–a de English," squirmed the little alien.

"Then take that!" and Jones kicked the peddler down the steps and out at the front gate.

Jones was a retired grocer and lived with his wife and daughter in a neat one-story house set forward in a 30 x 140 foot city lot. Having little with which to occupy his time, and wishing to prescribe who should and who should not enter his home, he had taken

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* The writer of this story received a cash prize of $100 in THE BLACK CAT story contest ending October 12, 1904.

upon himself the labor of answering the door-bell. Of late a plague of peddlers was driving him distracted.

He had just installed himself in his arm-chair and taken up the morning paper when the bell again rang. He got up with a muttered malediction, went to the front-door and opened it.

"Potatoes to-day, lady? Nice, fresh? Dollar a sack!"

The peddler was a husky young fellow of five-and-twenty, or thereabout, and Jones paused. True, the fellow, utterly regardless of his sex, had called him "lady" but then — Well, Jones had learned to consider discretion the better part of valor, and so, scowling horribly, he slammed the door in the peddler's face.

After ringing the bell a time or two, by way of diversion, the potato-hawker went his way, and again Jones installed himself in his chair, as a wonderful idea came and entered his brain and buzzed about a bit, like a honey-bee in the wrong hive. He would attach a nickel-in-the-slot machine to his gate, so arranged that all who wished to come through the gate would first have to deposit a nickel in the machine. This would prevent peddlers entering his yard and ringing his door-bell. But then — No! The peddlers would fill up the machine with brass slugs, and torment him as often as ever.

Bz–z–z–z–z–z–z!

The sound of the electric bell whirred through the house like that of a fire alarm, and with three strides Jones was on his feet and at his front door.

"Any needles, pins, hairpins, safety-pins, thread, sealing-wax, china-mending-cement, ironing-wax, soap, perfume, corn-salve, cold-cream, dandruff-cure, shaving-soap, tooth-brushes, nail-brushes, hair-brushes, combs, hand-mirrors, chewing-gum, thimbles — "

The peddler paused for breath, and Jones, having sized up the fellow, gathered himself into a battering-ram and made a rush. Another instant and the neighbors beheld a small, lean peddler flying down the steps of Jones's house, with the ex-grocer in hot pursuit. The peddler took the gate at a leap, but his pursuer, being stout and rusty, was compelled to stop where the fence began, and thence he hurled impotent maledictions down the street.

When the peddler was out of sight, Jones returned to his castle. brought out a huge padlock and chain, and chained the gate fast.

Some small boys saw him, and no sooner had he retired to his arm-chair than the youngsters climbed the low fence and rang the bell until the battery gave out. Whereat, the excited ex-grocer came forth with a rush — and succeeded in knocking the inoffensive letter-carrier down the front steps.

Jones removed the padlock and chain from the gate and considered. He might get a cannon, load it, set it on his front porch, and place over its mouth the sign, "No Peddlers or Agents." This idea he immediately surrendered for the more brilliant one of buying a big bull-dog and stationing the beast in the front yard, with the sign "No Peddlers or Agents" painted on dog-house and dog. But the peddlers would soon poison the dog!

Jones looked at his gate, which stood about eighteen feet from his front door, and sighed: "If it were only half a mile from that gate to the door, then I'd be rid of the whole tribe of peddlers. Only half a mile," he repeated. Suddenly he slapped his thigh and cried: "By crickety, I've got it! I'll make it half a mile from that gate to the door, and I won't move the house an inch. At least," he added, thoughtfully, "I'll make it seem half a mile."

The next morning Mrs. Jones and her daughter were amazed at beholding a great wagon-load of lumber deposited on the sidewalk and street before their house. This load was followed by another and another.

"My, Pearl," exclaimed Mrs. Jones, "your father will be dreadful angry when he learns that some one is using our front sidewalk for a lumber pile!"

Just then the husband and father himself came down the street and viewed the lumber with wreathed smiles.

"It's pa's doings!" cried Pearl.

"John, John!" called Mrs. Jones from the parlor window, "what's all that lumber for?"

"Shut the window and be quiet!" commanded Jones.

A little later a number of carpenters entered the ex-grocer's front gate and fell to work, and, breakfast being over, Mrs. Jones and her daughter sat down at the parlor windows and watched the men. They had lived long enough to know that what father did was worth watching. The neighbors also watched the carpenters.

What were they doing over at Jones's house? They weren't raising the building, nor erecting an addition to it. The best that any one could judge, the carpenters were constructing steps — tens, scores, hundreds, of steps — building on the ex-grocer's premises a stairway that led up into the air, then down to the earth, then up again, then down again, then up still again, then down still again, to lose itself at last somewhere on the side of the house opposite to that where it began.

Finally, the carpenters took their leave. Then the painters came and, later, took their leave, and during all this time no human being had been able to get into Jones's house, save Jones himself, and his wife and daughter. For the front door of the ex-grocer's home had disappeared.

Where Jones's gate had formerly stood there now appeared a neat door, and on the first of June a lettered tin sign was nailed up on this door. It read:

PRESS BUTTON AND WALK UP

The letter-carrier was the first outsider to read this sign. He had a registered letter for the ex-grocer and must deliver it in person. He pressed the button beneath the lettered tin sign and the door flew open. A steep stairway led directly up from the threshold. He mounted to the top of this stairway and before him stretched down a second steep stairway. He descended. At the bottom the way turned, and there at his feet arose a still steeper and considerably longer stairway. Perspiring till he washed the ten-cent stamp off the registered letter in his hand, he mounted this third stairway, which led over the roof of the ex-grocer's house, and coming to the top he saw stretching down before him still another steep stairway. He descended, and at the bottom looked about for a door. No door! Instead, another stairway! Swearing softly, he climbed this fifth stairway, and almost fell as he saw stretching down before him a sixth stairway.

With his knees shaking under him he slowly and painfully descended this sixth flight, and behold! there at the bottom was the lost front door of the ex-grocer. He rang the bell and delivered the registered letter to Jones in person. When the

registered receipt was signed, the letter-carrier looked hard and long at the cause of all his labors, mopped his dripping forehead and remarked dryly, his remark being the only dry thing about him: "You've got a nice place out here in the country." Then, without another word, the letter-carrier turned, went back up the first flight of stairs, down the second, up the third, down the fourth, up the fifth, down the sixth, and stood again in the street, eighteen feet from Jones's front door.

But this servant of Uncle Sam had fathomed only the shallows of the ex-grocer's inventive genius. A potato peddler was the first to cast a line to the bottom of the dreadful abyss.

He, too, pressed the innocent-looking button beneath the tin sign, and when the door before him flew open he thrust in his head and queried, "Any potatoes to-day, lady?" Seeing a flight of stairs and not a lady before him, he ascended to the top of the flight, then descended a second flight, then ascended a third flight, then descended a fourth flight, then ascended a fifth flight, then to his left turned off and descended a sixth flight, all the time wondering what kind of a trance he was in. At the bottom of the sixth flight of stairs was a door. On the door was the sign:

PEDDLERS AND AGENTS WELCOME
PRESS THE BUTTON

The peddler gazed long and earnestly at this remarkable sign, then pressed the button. The door before him flew open, and in another instant something wide and hard closed at his back, shoving him into the street four feet from where he had stood some minutes before.

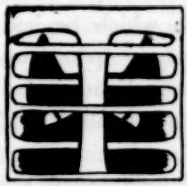
A laugh, too near to be directed at another than the peddler and too boisterous to be ghostly, smote the ears of the hawker.

"That sliding partition works like a charm," said Jones.

What the peddler said would make this too long a story.

# The Dungeon of Deception.*

BY GEORGE DYRE ELDRIDGE.



HERE were a hundred means by which Marzio could have incurred the enmity of the old Marquis. In fact, there was nothing easier. The actual cause was first falling in love with his niece and afterwards, when he was warned, laughingly answering with something that closely resembled the English proverb, "Threatened men live long."

Marzio took care of himself and flirted with the dark-haired Marie until immunity rendered him careless and somewhat disposed to wish that something would occur to enable him to prove his valor and win favor thereby in his mistress's eyes.

None the less, he cursed himself for a fool when, late one cloud-ridden night, he found himself in the narrow way that skirted the edge of the cliff, leading to the upper town under the frowning walls. As events proved, this second estimate of himself was more accurate than the first.

He probed every door and cranny before he passed it, with dread of an attack from behind, and looked anxiously ahead to where the darkness of the way broke against the softer sky at the top of the cliff. But, keen as his rapier was, it could not penetrate the doors that stood closed in the depths of a particularly dark vestibule, and these opened noiselessly after he had passed, giving exit to men who followed up the steep way with cat-like tread.

Suddenly, at a turn of the cliff, strong hands grasped his arms and drew them back, and, in the suddenness of the attack, his rapier fell from his hand and rattled down the precipice, over which he expected to follow. Even with the choking down of the cry that started to his lips, he began a hasty "*Paternoster*" and "*Ave Maria*," as a preparation for the death that yawned for him.

Such disposal of his victim did not enter into the old Marquis's

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purpose. A cloak was thrown over Marzio's head and he felt himself lifted to the shoulders of his assailants, whom he was half inclined to carry over the cliff with himself, as he felt that he easily could, the path was so narrow and the edge unprotected. That he did not carry the impulse into execution was double confirmation of his recent estimate of himself.

When dawn began to penetrate the darkness in which he had lain since he had been thrown roughly by his captors upon what seemed to be the floor of a room — or at least a walled and roofed enclosure — Marzio shook off the stupor which had assailed him and sat up to take account of his surroundings.

A line of barred openings, window-shaped, first grew out of the gloom. Through them came the freshness of the night air, of which he had for some time had perception without full sense of its meaning. The room was greater in extent than he had reason to anticipate, and as the light grew, it assumed the aspect of a very comfortable apartment, not uncomfortably furnished. In truth, notwithstanding the unimpeachable solidity of the stone walls, a very fair amount of hope and courage was the result of what he saw. It was scarcely supposable that any purpose of immediate violence was to be assumed from the circumstance of the failure of his assailants to dispose of him by tossing over the cliff, especially when this omission was followed by housing him thus comfortably.

The view from the windows included the blue waters of the bay, sparkling in the first light of morning, the olive and orange groves on the slopes of the farther shore, and the cottages of the little fishing village that nestled at the foot of the great cliffs up which he was holding his way when his assailants overtook him. Just on the edge of the picture there was a glimpse of Marie's home and he laughed with pleasure at the sight.

The view told him accurately where he was, in the east front of the castle that stood on the highest point of the cliff, beetling above the bay into which it seemed ready to drop; and by craning his neck, he was able to catch a glimpse here and there of a projecting rock, a clinging tree, or a dark shadow where a crevice lurked. Far below the sight was lost in space where the cliff seemed to draw away from the bay. He smiled at the care that had guarded these windows with heavy iron bars.

If he had any doubt regarding the intent with which he was brought here, it vanished with two days of solitary confinement. He passed the days at the window gazing across the blue water at the dear home among the olive and orange groves; or at times sprang up and walked with hasty strides up and down the apartment, that seemed too narrow to his growing impatience. When night came he watched the stars that came out in the blue of the sky and the lights that twinkled from the sea and land and then, wearied, fell asleep and dreamed of freedom and Marie. While he slept food and water were placed beside him, but no sound awoke him from his slumbers.

On the third day a nervous frenzy seized him, till, wild with the thought of his impotence, he grasped the bars of the middle window and shook them in his fury. To his astonishment, they suddenly gave way and, falling outward, were so near bearing him with them that it was only by the utmost agility he saved himself from dashing into the yawning abyss.

As he drew back into the chamber his blood seemed to freeze about his heart and he sank, helpless to save himself, upon the floor. Now he knew where he was. Back then came whispers that he had heard in boyhood, and had shunned since he came to larger knowledge, of men who had suddenly disappeared and had never again been seen among the living. Sometimes their bodies, crushed and mangled out of recognition, were found at the foot of the cliff, as if they had fallen from a great height.

He was in the "Dungeon of Deception" — a name at which every dweller by the bay shuddered, but of which not one would own to his dearest friend ever to have heard. No man who entered it had been known to come from it alive. More than once he had rowed his boat across the bay, trying, with furtive glances, to catch a glimpse of its iron bars, but now he knew them so hidden from every possible point of view that no man could have seen them from the other side.

At length he roused himself, and with the feeling of terror that assails a child when he walks on the unguarded edge of a height, he crept to the widely gaping opening the fallen bars had left and gazed again across the bay to the home among the trees. There was the hopelessness of farewell in the look that had not been there before.

Then, with stern command of his nerves, he climbed on to the window ledge and, thrusting his body half through the opening, he gazed into the abyss. Down, down, it went, a sheer descent of hundreds of feet, and far below he saw the tops of great trees that grew between the foot of the cliff and the water. The cliff itself curved outward, so that when he thus gazed downward all the world save this mass of rock was hidden.

He looked up, and above him rose the stern walls of the castle, sharp against the sky and so joined with the cliff that no line of separation could be seen. As far as the eye could see, there was no break or opening in the walls. Above there was nothing save the boundless air, that made him dizzy and sick as he gazed into its immeasurable depths.

The sight, however, that most held his attention and thought was a projection of the cliff some three feet below his window, fairly smooth on top, and of sufficient size to give standing room. A man could easily attain it from the window, the sill of which would afford opportunity to steady himself for a look below. That look would, probably, reveal nothing but the downward sweeping cliff and the upward towering walls, which he already saw, and, in any event, he would simply be perched in mid-air hundreds of feet from solid ground. Every consideration told him that the attempt was useless, but that knowledge was nothing compared with the other knowledge that for one moment at least he would be again without this horrible chamber; and there might be another projection still lower, a pine rooted in the cliff, that would swing him to some sheltering crevasse. He would dare it, whatever came.

He was already on the outer ledge and ready to swing himself down for a footing on the projecting rock, when a sudden thought caused him to draw back. He could not be the only one who had seen that footing. Why had it been left? With considerable effort, he loosened another bar from the window, and with this, leaning far outward, reached the projected rock. The first blow gave back a dull, unstable sound. A second and heavy blow — no heavier, however, than his feet would have given had he dropped from the window ledge — started the rock, which hung a second as if in mid-air, and then crashed down into the horrible

pit that yawned more hideously beneath. He drew back, and, sick and fainting, fell upon the dungeon floor.

The adventure had revealed to him the malignancy of his captor and had given him a weapon. Now he planned to sleep in the day and remain awake at night, when some one came with food and water, attack the visitor and fight his way to liberty or a quick death. But all his watching was useless. Morning showed the replenished stock of water and provisions, but all his vigilance failed to give him knowledge how or when they were introduced.

On the tenth day of his confinement, when he looked — as look he always did on the first glimpse of light — across the bay to the home among the trees, he discovered gay patches that seemed of colored cloths dancing in the wind and sun, as if of some sudden festival or merry-making. Could it be that, ignorant of his fate, with the country stirred by his disappearance, as it must have been by that of even a lesser man, this house could put on a gala attire and make itself joyous? Again that nervous frenzy seized him till he was almost tempted to throw himself from the gaping window and end all in the abyss below.

Again, for the twentieth time, he made the circuit of the walls, testing every stone, if perchance it might give back a sound that should indicate a passage or opening beyond, and getting back the same dull, heavy response that told of unvarying solidity. Suddenly it came to his mind that he had never tested the wall behind his couch, and with feverish haste he drew it from the wall and beat with his bar of iron upon the uncovered stones. There came a revulsion of feeling that sent the blood back to his heart when one stone gave a hollow answer. He sat down on the edge of the couch, with his gaze fastened on this particular stone, and it was some time before he could repeat the blow. When he did, there came back the same hollow sound, so different from the stern solidity of any other stone he had struck.

Recovering from the shock of his surprise, he attacked the stone with a reckless disregard of the noise which his blows made, the one thought in his mind to force it from its place. It added to his surprise that he found it more soft and yielding than he had anticipated, and with the heavy bar of iron he made rapid progress

in forcing his way through it. On the second day his efforts resulted in breaking a hole through the rock into a hollow that lay beneath, and in two days more he had broken the soft rock into bits, which had fallen into the yawning darkness.

So far as he knew, notwithstanding the recklessness of his work, it was unsuspected by his captors. The days passed with the same dull monotony, save as broken by his sudden toil. At morning he gazed across the water and feasted his eyes and imagination on the groves of olive and orange; then he ate and drank and took up his work. At night he replaced the couch and slept on it, wearied with the exertions of the day. During the night his unseen visitor came and went.

With the completion of the destruction of the stone and the opening which it gave into some hidden way, new conflict came. Hope dawned anew, with renewed dread of the mystery that surrounded him. The breaking away of the bars, the loosening of the rock on which he was about to place his trust, had startled him with distrust, which the gaping dark of the new opening increased rather than diminished. With the knowledge that the issue of this new attempt might be either life or death, it was two days before he had courage to explore the darkness into which the crushed stone had fallen. During these days he fed his courage with the view of the far-off home, and dreams of all that might there be threatening him in his love.

On the third day, as soon as he had eaten, he drew the couch away and, trembling, reached his hand with the bar into the dark. As near as feeling could tell him, he had made an opening into a passage cut in the solid rock of the cliff, not of sufficient extent to admit of his walking uprightly, but certainly broad and high enough for the passage of his body. It was a mystery which he had no power to explore save by risking his body, and, after one last look at the bright sunlight, the waters of the bay, and the grove-hidden home, he committed himself to the unknown.

The passage in which he found himself was some four feet in width and of about the same height. It seemed to extend in length in either direction, the one leading across his chamber and apparently into the body of the cliff, the other away from the chamber and in the general direction of the edge of the cliff.

He chose the latter direction and, half walking and half creeping, moved slowly forward. The passage declined somewhat sharply, which Marzio felt to be favorable, but he had an impression that it gradually turned away from its original course, which caused him uneasiness. No light came to him, but the freshness and coolness of the air convinced him that there must be an opening somewhere, if he could but reach it.

As he pushed on, seeing nothing, bending his head to avoid striking it against the roof of the passage, conscious of the walls on either hand, and feeling his steps slowly before he took them, the old dread of the malignancy of his captors began to replace the courage with which he had trusted himself to the darkness, until more than once he was compelled forcibly to exert his will power to prevent himself from turning back to the dungeon, if only once more to see the light and the day.

Now the way narrowed until from the stooping posture he was forced to his knees, and as he advanced on these, groping with his hands along the rough ground, he could feel the sides pressing in upon him, as if the cliff were reaching out to close him in with its mighty weight. Lower came the roof, closer the walls, but still no obstacle arose in front, and he pressed on, though now he was reduced to crawling on his belly and a return, if it were forced, could be only by crawling backward.

Suddenly, at what seemed an immeasurable distance, a tiny spark, as of a star millions of miles away, grew out of the dark. For some time he was in doubt as to its nature, but at last it showed itself a gleam of sunlight from the distant day, stealing through some opening in the rock. He pressed on with new courage, and, though the passage narrowed to the smallest space that would admit the body of a man, still the light grew, slowly and painfully, but still grew.

After what seemed hours of toil the light had become strong enough so that he could see dimly the walls of rock far ahead of him and across the opening a gleam of blue. Then came out the outlines of the opening, only to make him sick at heart. It was high and narrow, narrower than the passage which just admitted his body. What if he should reach it after hours, or was it days of toil, only to find it too narrow to allow him to pass?

The sun was low behind the cliffs when at last he reached the opening. It was long since he had known that his fear was realized, that before him was a narrow slit only which gave no possibility of passage, and yet he had been unable to refrain from pressing on. Now he was there, his head resting against the solid rock that closed the passage, the solid roof crushing down upon him and the walls pressing in on him, while through the slit he looked out upon the bay, blue in the fading light, the orange and olive groves, and the dear home, half hidden by their leafage.

This was the end of the toil that had consumed the hours. The hot tears filled his eyes and blurred the scene, but with the tears came the realization that he must begin the toil back, up the ascent, and gain, if possible, that far dungeon. Suddenly, it seemed as if the cliff shook behind him with the fall of a heavy body; then all was still again.

With one last look at the darkening bay and the far grove, he started on his return; but with the first movement his feet struck against some hard, unyielding object. He pressed with all his might only to find it solid and immovable. Unable to turn, scarcely able to move, so closely the cliff pressed upon him, he tried to make his feet do the service of hands to explore the obstacle. A great rock was behind him, where a few moments before he had passed, completely blocking the narrow passage!

. . . . . .

Yesterday, workmen on the ruins of the old castle came upon a curious old drain which led toward the very face of the cliff, but which was blocked by a heavy stone a few feet before the face was reached. On removing this, they found the skeleton of a man lying at full length, his skull resting against a narrow slit that opened to the daylight, the empty eye-sockets gazing across the blue waters of the bay as if watching the old half-ruined house among the orange and olive trees on the farther shore, and one skeleton hand pushed through the slit, as if it had waved a signal or a farewell.

# Sister Martin's Circus Prayer.*

BY RICHARD BARKER SHELTON.

RS. MARTIN stood before the high board fence covered with the lurid lithographs which the bill-posters had plastered up some two weeks before. The July sun poured down from a cloudless sky, and every passing wagon sent a cloud of choking dust floating about her from the road; but she gave no need to either discomfort. Indeed, so engrossed was she that the ancient umbrella she had brought to shield her from the sun was tilted carelessly over her shoulder until the scorching rays beat directly on her sparse gray hair. She even forgot the dragging weight of the basket of eggs she carried to "trade" at the store.

It was all there, just as it used to be, only, perhaps, a trifle more ornate — the blonde-haired lady in the pink tights and abbreviated skirts, poising daintily on one toe on the back of a superb white horse; the acrobats, swinging fearlessly from dizzy trapezes; the clowns with their heads stuck through paper hoops; the troupes of performing dogs, the jugglers, the contortionists, the animals, the calliope, the gaudy floats; in short, the circus as it is pictured in the posters of the advance agents.

Mrs. Martin stood drinking it all in. To her it opened up another world. It gave her a taste of that distant, almost forgotten youth, before life had become narrow, and mean, and hard. It quickened her pulses and brought a spot of color into either sallow cheek. She looked at every picture; she read every word, and from the announcement in foot-high letters above the lithographs she learned that the "greatest show on earth, a gorgeous combination of three-ringed circus, hippodrome, and menagerie" would give two performances in Randall, Thursday, July 10th.

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*The writer of this story received a cash prize of $100 in THE BLACK CAT story contest ending Oct. 12, 1904.

Tomorrow was Thursday, July 10th, she reflected with a sigh. She could almost hear the intoxicating circus music, and smell the circus smells as she plodded down the dusty road.

"I should sorter like to go once more," she told herself, with a little reminiscent thrill at the thought of it.

At the store she did her "trading;" exchanged the eggs for tea and mustard, and a few yards of calico to make new aprons. But her mind, usually so keen at these times, seemed far away. She did not dicker for an extra half-yard of the calico, nor did she insist that a few nutmegs be thrown in for good measure. With her parcels in the egg-basket and the ancient umbrella held over her head, she made her way down the road — to stop once more before the alluring posters.

This second perusal of their charms seemed to inspire her with a reckless determination; for, when she once more turned away, her lips were set in a straight line, and her worn, old face had something of eager anticipation in it.

"I'm a-goin' to that circus," she muttered to herself. And every little while, along the homeward way, as if to prop her courage, she repeated, "I am a-goin'."

Just how she would manage it, by what adroit stratagem she could circumvent the objections her husband would be sure to raise, she had not as yet fully decided. She only knew that somehow, by some means, she was going to the circus. Delightful tremors of anticipation had already taken possession of her. She had not been so pleasantly excited since she was a girl.

She realized, with a thrill of thankfulness, that the rest of the day was hers to dream away without interruption. Her husband and the hired man were fencing a recently purchased pasture some miles from the house, and would not be home until evening. When she reached home, she went to the attic, and from a cedar chest she brought out bits of lace and ribbon that had long lain in lavender. With these odds and ends of finery she managed to make the old black cashmere, in which she had long since lost all interest, fairly presentable. She smiled grimly when her sombre Sunday bonnet flaunted a brave array of bright ribbon.

The shadows were lengthening eastward when her work was done. She put the supper on the table and, tenderly laying the

transformed dress and Sunday bonnet in a bureau drawer, sat down to await her husband's arrival.

She had not long to wait. Just before sundown a wagon rattled into the yard, and a moment later, Bemis Martin shuffled into the kitchen. He was a big, stoop-shouldered man, clean-shaven and heavy of frame. His mouth had that hard, unyielding expression which years of struggle with a none too fertile soil are prone to give, and his deep-set gray eyes were cold and flinty.

"Supper ready?" he asked superfluously, at the same time drawing a chair to the table.

His wife sat down opposite him, and poured the tea from the earthen pot. Then she sat back in her chair, watching him narrowly, and eating but little. Her fingers worked nervously beneath the table; the spots of color burned in her cheeks.

"They's a circus at Randall, tomorrer," she said at length.

Martin grunted explosively between mouthfuls: "Circus, hey?" he said scornfully.

"Yes, a circus," she repeated, her eyes widening and her courage rising, as she scented battle. "I ain't' been to a circus not since I went with Jim Allen when I was a girl — long before we was married. I should sorter like to go once more."

Bemis Martin laid down his knife and fork. He sat back in his chair, and his eyes narrowed. Their irate glance seemed to go through her frail body mercilessly like steel shafts.

"You crazy?" he demanded. "Talkin' o' such carryin's-on at your age! I ain't never been to a circus in my life, an' my young 'uns never went, neither."

"If our young 'uns had been allowed to go to circuses an' such places once in a while, we might 'a had some of 'em here at home with us now," she said, sadly. "I ain't been anywheres for years, an' I'm a-goin' to that circus tomorrer."

"You be?" he glared. "How you goin' to git down to Randall? Where you goin' to git your fifty cents to git in with?"

"I'm a-goin' to that circus," she reiterated, with the pathetic tenacity of helplessness.

"Humph!" he grunted, pushing back his chair, "You better git ready to go to Wednesday evenin' meetin', an' let circuses take care o' themselves."

In the happiness of her afternoon's occupation, Mrs. Martin had quite forgotten the Wednesday evening prayer-meeting, and it was with a heart seething with rebellion that she washed the supper dishes and put on a fresh gingham dress. A prayer-meeting tonight! Her whole being revolted in a sudden fierce blaze of hatred; but urged on by some unrecognized instinct of habit or obedience, she got herself ready and climbed into the wagon beside her husband.

They drove down the road through the July twilight. Crickets chirped in the gathering dusk; in the meadows the frogs piped; and far away the whip-poor-wills were calling musically. Bemis Martin drove stolidly, with never a word to his wife, and not a glance in her direction. Mrs. Martin sat stiffly upright, unmindful of everything save the tumult in her heart and her desperate determination, which only grew the stronger in the face of her seeming helplessness.

They entered the bare little vestry of the church, where some dozen people, men and women, were ranged along the hard settees. The minister, seated on the little platform, nodded a smiling welcome, which was utterly lost on Mrs. Martin.

"I'm goin' tomorrer — I'm goin' tomorrer!" she was repeating wildly to herself as they took their seats.

The minister rose and opened the meeting with a quavering hymn. At its close he turned his eyes towards Bemis Martin.

"Will Brother Martin lead us in prayer?" said he, and the little company knelt on the uneven floor, while Martin hoarsely cleared his throat, and then began in his deep, rumbling voice:

"We come to Thee this evenin', O Lord, with all our manifold cares an' sorrers. We have learned in the past that Thy arm is strong, an' that we can lean on Thee. We seek Thy guidance an' Thy support. We are but children of the dust, an' our eyes are easily turned from Thee. Give us Thy support an' Thy guidin' strength. Some of us in partickeler, O Lord, are bound to the things of earth. Some of us would resk eternal salvation for those things which are not pleasin' in Thy sight." (Mrs. Martin pricked up her ears. A surge of hot blood swept into her face.) "Some of us would stray in the paths of sin an' would linger in the company of the unrighteous. Show them the error of their

way, O Lord. Show them that there is no compromise with Thee. Let them see that in yonder tents of the Philistines in Randall tomorrer there is nothin' but wickedness an' vanity — a snare set for totterin' feet. Teach them obedience to Thy will. Teach them to shun such pitfalls set by the devil. Soften their hearts which are turnin' from Thee. An' lead us all in Thy way forevermore. Amen."

The rumbling voice died away. There was the usual chorus of "Amens," and then a tense silence, during which Mrs. Martin's heart thumped so loudly that she feared it must betray her.

"O Lord —" it was a weak, pathetic treble. Bemis Martin uncovered his eyes and looked at his wife in unfeigned surprise. In all the years of their married life he had never before known her to lift her voice in public prayer. Her upturned face, with the closed eyes, was scarlet. He saw that her clasped hands, resting on the settee before her, trembled violently.

"O Lord, some of us come to Thy throne seldom. Perhaps it's because we ain't worthy, an' perhaps it's because we don't want to be pesterin'. But this evenin' we come before Thee to show that our hearts ain't so full of wickedness as some of Thy servants would have Thee think. Thou knowest, O Lord, we ain't wicked just because we thirst for a little innercent amusement that's been denied us for forty years. Thou knowest there ain't no wickedness in seein' a — a "— she caught her breath — "a circus," she finally cried, defiantly. She was aware, without uncovering her eyes, that every head in the room was lifted, and that every eye in the room was staring at her in wonder. She was aware that her husband had clutched her arm, but she pushed his hand away from her, and went on wildly:

"They're all thine, O Lord, every critter in the cages an' every man an' woman actor. Thou madest them all, an' thou doest all things well. There can't be no harm in goin' to see Thy handiwork. But there's some folks say it's wicked to want to go. O Lord, read their hearts aright. See through their shams an' learn that it ain't the circus that's wicked in their eyes, but the spendin' of a half-a-dollar to git in."

Her voice had risen to hysterical pitch. The tears streamed down her wrinkled face.

"They've been hard an' harsh an' close, O Lord. They've driven their own children from their door. Touch their hearts with Thy love an' Thy understandin'. They say Thy arm is mighty. Show Thy strength to them. Melt their hearts of stone. Make them see it ain't no sin to spend fifty cents for a circus once in forty years. If Thou doest this, O Lord, we will believe in Thy might an' that Thou art a lovin' God, an' Thy servant will sound Thy praises forevermore. Amen."

There was dead silence in the room, save for Mrs. Martin's hysterical sobs. Everyone rose and stared at Bemis Martin and his wife. The man's face was an apoplectic red. He trembled as from an acute attack of ague. The minister hastily started a hymn, and under cover of the music Bemis Martin led his overwrought wife from the vestry.

The die was cast, and she was prepared to take the consequences. She knew just how she would answer the stormy outburst of his wrath. Silently he unhitched the horse; silently he placed her in the wagon; silently they drove homeward under the July stars which burned softly in the hazy sky. Her shoulders still rose and fell convulsively, and her cheeks were still wet.

She felt an arm steal clumsily about her in the first caress she had known in years.

"There, mother, there! I wouldn't take on so. You have had it consider'ble hard, that's a fact," said Martin huskily.

Early next morning the minister drove over to the Martin place. Bemis, in his ill-fitting Sunday clothes, was harnessing the horse.

"Good morning, Brother Martin," said the clergyman. "I just ran over to suggest that, in light of Sister Martin's — er — rather peculiar prayer last night, I'm inclined to think that perhaps it might prove one of those mysterious workings of Providence if you should let her go to Randall today. She might go over with some of those folks who always go, you know ——"

Bemis drew himself up.

"She is goin' to the circus with me," he said defiantly.

# The Black Cat Prize Story Contest.

Here are the winners in the short-story competition which closed October 12, 1904.

| | |
|---|---|
| **1st Prize $1,500** | Miss Susan K. Glaspell, Davenport, Iowa.<br>Edwin Carlile Litsey, Lebanon, Ky.<br>Adeline Knapp, Mill Valley, Calif. |
| **2d Prize $1,200** | Stanley R. Osborn, Omaha, Nebr.<br>Bradley Gilman, Boston, Mass.<br>Mr. W. H. Osborne, Newark, N. J. |
| **3d Prize $700** | Jack London, Oakland, Calif.<br>Mr. W. L. Lockwood, Saratoga, N. Y. |
| **4th Prize $300** | Frank Lillie Pollock, Toronto, Canada. |
| **5th Prize $300** | Don Mark Lemon, San Francisco, Calif. |
| **6th Prize $200** | Birdsall Jackson, Wantagh, N. Y. |
| **7th Prize $200** | Miss Mary B. Mullett, Clinton, Iowa. |
| **8th Prize $200** | Frank X. Finnegan, Chicago, Ill. |
| **9th Prize $200** | Charles McIlvaine, Cambridge, Md. |
| **10th Prize $200** | Mr. I. C. Davidson, Carthage, Ill. |

**11th to 30th $3,000**
**20 Prizes of $150.00 each**

Mr. C. B. Loomis, Fanwood, N. J.
Mr. W. T. Arndt, London Times.
Mr. Chapin Howard, Grafton, Vt.
Miss Catherine Carr, St. Charles, Ill.
H. J. Hoyt, Mifflintown, Pa.
Don Mark Lemon, San Francisco, Calif.
Florence Seyler Thompson, Merrill, Wisc.
Mr. Hays Blackman, Sedalia, Mo.
Mr. A. W. North, Woodland, Calif.
Mrs. I. F. Mather, Germantown, N. Y.
Mrs. Jennie M. Chenery, Jamestown, N. D.
Miss Frances Grover, Washington, D. C.
Mr. Clifford Howard, Washington, D. C.
Pauline C. Bouvé, Boston, Mass.
Mrs. Frank P. Penfield, Houston, Texas.
Ward Wilson, Coronado, Calif.
Miss Catherine Young Glen, Elizabeth, N. J.
Miss Anna McClure Sholl, New York, N. Y.
Franklin P. Carrigan, Philadelphia, Pa.
W. George Gribble, Cambridge, Mass.

**31st to 60th $3,000**
**30 Prizes of $100.00 each**

John M. Oskison, New York, N. Y.
Edmund S. Middleton, Yonkers, N. Y.
Miss Susan K. Glaspell, Davenport, Iowa.
Miss Grace S. Shephard, Brunswick, Maine.
Lucretia D. Clapp, Burlington, Iowa.
Arthur Stanley Riggs, New York, N. Y.
Ethel Claire Randall, Chicago, Ill.
Miss Florence Olmstead, Savannah, Ga.
Fred S. Brown, Brooklyn, N. Y.
John Cain, Salt Lake City, Utah.

**30 Prizes of $100.00 each** *(Continued)*

Anne de B. Scotland, Denver, Colo.
W. T. Fernandez, Brooklyn, N. Y.
George Seibel, Pittsburg, Pa.
George R. Chester, Connersville, Ind.
Caroline Ticknor, Jamaica Plain, Mass.
Mrs. H. M. Papworth, Sanford, Florida.
Crete Warren, St. Paul, Minn.
Mr. Chapin Howard, Grafton, Vt.
Miss Anne Pilsbury, Boston, Mass.
Miss Jane Pratt, Roxbury, Mass.
Mr. A. W. North, Woodland, Calif.
Don Mark Lemon, San Francisco, Calif.
Don Mark Lemon, San Francisco, Calif.
Clifford Howard, Washington, D. C.
Richard Barker Shelton, Hampton, N. H.
Miss Violet Melville, Guatemala, C. A.
Elizabeth Lambert Wood, Portland, Oregon.
James O. Fagan, Waltham, Mass.
Mr. B. R. Carlisle, Ashtabula, Ohio.
Mrs. Ethel Watts Mumford, New York, N. Y.

To the $11,000 for prizes $1,500 was added for the following writers, for stories which failed to win prizes, but were deemed available: —

**Stories Purchased** **$1,500**

Philip L. Allen, New York, N. Y.; Mrs. Mary Foote Arnold, Terre Haute, Ind.; Don Mark Lemon, San Francisco, Calif.; Miss Jessie Beals, Boston, Mass.; Robert Cooke Bicknell, Chattanooga, Tenn.; Shannon Birch, Hanover, Kans.; Lieut. F. V. S. Chamberlain, Fort Logan, Colo.; Walter Church, Yellville, Ark.; Miss J. L. Glover, McPhersonville, S. C.; Miss Irene Hardy, Palo Alto, Calif.; Frances Henry, Chicago, Ill.; Stanley Edwards Johnson, Boston, Mass.; Miss Camilla J. Knight, Gloucester, Mass.; Will Lisenbee, Cherokee, Kans.; Winona Wilcox Payne, Cleveland, Ohio.; Joseph Noel, Oakland, Calif.; Henry Oyen, Chicago, Ill.; Mary A. Sheehan, Philadelphia, Pa.; Geo. W. Summers, Parkersburg, W. Va.; Frank H. Sweet, Waynesboro, Va.

No previous contest brought so many fascinating stories of the sort which THE BLACK CAT was the first to call into life and which won for this magazine the title, "The story-telling hit of the age," and never before were so many tales of equal merit received. This latter fact made necessary a division of some of the prizes, which contingency was provided for in the conditions governing the contest. Therefore, the second prize of $1,000 was increased to $1,200 and the third prize of $500 was increased to $700. Writers whose stories failed to gain prizes, but were found available for purchase, received $1,500, thus bringing the total to $12,500 cash. Manuscripts were received from every part of the globe. Thirty-one states of the Union, Canada, England, and Central America are represented in the winning list. The State

of California, which carries off nearly $2,500, leads both in number of manuscripts submitted and winnings. Both sexes share almost equally in the honors, the sum of $12,500 going to forty-three men and thirty-two women. The prizes were paid by certified checks on The International Trust Company, Boston, Mass.

Now a word as to the manner and method of making the awards and the complaints of certain contestants whose stories were rejected. Ever since the first number of THE BLACK CAT was issued ten years ago its founder and publisher has passed final judgment on the stories submitted for its pages. In the contest just closed he personally read, between July 1st and November 30th, more than seven thousand manuscripts. Of the remaining stories submitted he examined many hundred which had been passed up to him by competent, experienced assistants, each of whom is permanently employed by the magazine and thoroughly familiar with its requirements and rules. To guard against the slipping through of a "Black Cat story," a cash reward was paid to each assistant reader, in addition to his salary, for every story passed up by him to the publisher and found worthy of a prize. The imperative instructions were, "If it's worth reading pass it up." As a further precaution against a slip of head or hand, a reward of $25 per story was paid to the second reader who passed up a manuscript marked unavailable by a first reader and found by the publisher to be worthy of a prize.

Every manuscript was judged solely upon its merits as a story, the name or fame of a writer receiving no consideration whatever. Hundreds of stories from leading authors, educators, public men and women, whose names might add lustre to The Roll of Honor, were returned simply because they did not meet the requirements. The publisher of THE BLACK CAT holds that he is the best judge of what is available for his publication. He knows that when he founded his periodical he founded something entirely outside of conventional lines — something which strongly appealed to intelligent, discriminating people. And while he is willing to accept the verdict of these he cannot accept the verdict of contestants, nor will he enlist the services of a committee of distinguished judges who cannot possibly devote the time and labor which are absolutely necessary to reaching a fair, honest result. Solely upon the excellence of its stories the future of THE BLACK CAT depends and no one can possibly be so deeply interested in that future as its publisher. If in exercising what the world over is recognized as a buyer's right — that he who pays is entitled to his choice — a mistake occurs and a really good story is rejected the loss certainly falls upon THE BLACK CAT and not upon the contributor whose offering will in these days find a ready market

provided it is what he claims for it. While the field is open to all, the man who writes "prize stories" only should never enter a BLACK CAT contest because there his work must compete with that of thousands of clever, successful writers and be judged, not by the man he beholds in the mirror, but by the man who pays.

A unique bit of fiction received from several would-be prize winners whose manuscripts were returned consists of the charge that these contests are "ingenious schemes for securing subscriptions." The fact is, THE BLACK CAT cannot be issued profitably for subscription purposes. Any one familiar with the printing and publishing business of to-day knows this. Not one-tenth of its circulation consists of subscriptions. Every number is offered on its individual merits by from 12,000 to 18,000 dealers. Every number is complete in itself and may be bought or not bought without missing anything in preceding or succeeding issues. That the magazine is bought on these lines month after month by from 125,000 to 160,000 people is the best tribute to its worth. The condition that a subscription must accompany each manuscript submitted in competition is a necessary check upon the indiscriminate offering of indifferent and worthless manuscripts in such quantities as would render the proper conduct of the contest impossible. Because no other publication on earth has paid such generous prizes for short stories as THE BLACK CAT has paid during the past ten years it is deluged with manuscripts. Even under its present rule from five to forty-five manuscripts have been received from a single writer in one contest, and the reading and handling of the manuscripts has required the entire time of a trained force for fully four months. The publisher will gladly pay $5,000 to any one who will suggest an acceptable plan, free from the subscription condition, whereby the total offering of manuscripts will not exceed past limits and equally satisfactory results will be achieved as to number and quality of prize stories. The cost of a contest such as that just closed is from $25,000 to $30,000 and the profit on the subscriptions received in connection therewith does not cover three per cent. of this outlay. As a matter of fact, the publication of THE BLACK CAT, begun largely as a labor of love, has become more and more so year after year owing to the constant increase in the cost of production.

That in spite of the most painstaking search for the cleverest short stories money can buy it has become necessary at times to print tales far below THE BLACK CAT'S standard — this is the publisher's only regret. He hopes to see the day when every story in its pages will be the equal of the best story ever told.

BOSTON, MASS.,
December, 1904.

# Don't Want to Hear

## What Medical Science Says About Coffee.

Many intelligent people don't care to listen to the truth about coffee causing their aches, ails and disturbances.

They keep on using the drug coffee and suffer from heart derangement, liver or kidney disorders or some kind of stomach and nervous troubles. They "don't believe coffee is to blame," and don't want to listen to medical science.

They should keep on with the coffee until Nature forces her facts home in the form of sickness or organic disease if they want absolute proof. Suppose on the other hand one should quit coffee in time and get well. It is easy if you shift to properly made Postum. In a few days you will feel a great change for the better.

Coffee sets up disease. POSTUM dissipates it and sets up health again. Medical science has found this out by experience, the Great Teacher. A prominent physician of Des Moines, Iowa, tells how he learned it:

"I am a physician of 18 years' practice. I felt the need of a stimulant, and for the first five or six years of my practice drank strong coffee. Eight or ten years ago I began to notice symptoms of heart disease. This seemed to be a regular organic type, and year by year became aggravated by dizziness, faintness and later, inability to walk at times. Finally I became such a confirmed invalid that I had to give up practice.

"Several years elapsed with the symptoms growing worse. I was considered marked for an early grave. I honestly believed that coffee was the trouble, and it finally became impressed upon me to give it up. This I found easier to do when POSTUM FOOD COFFEE was used in its place. I made the change more to satisfy my friends than with any hope of benefit from such a simple change, especially in such an incurable case as mine. I was debilitated and very weak, and about 30 pounds short of my old weight.

"From the first week I noticed a marked change and within three months I was almost fully restored to my old strength and health, with the heart trouble and dizziness all gone.

"These facts are known to hundreds of my friends and acquaintances throughout this city."

Name and address given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

**There's a reason.**